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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Thursday, July 1, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "SELECTING AN ELECTRIC REFRIGERATOR." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics and the Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Summer's here, in full swing. Cool drinks, cold, crisp salads, chilled desserts are in order. And that suggests something quite definite to the homemakers who are rejoicing in the advent of electric current to their doors. They would like to have an electric refrigerator just as soon as possible, before the weather gets any hotter. Even after summer's over, the electric refrigerator will be valuable for safeguarding food.

Every purchaser wants to be sure she is getting the best value for the money invested in so large a piece of equipment as an electric refrigerator. If you finance it with time-payments, let me suggest that before you sign a contract on the dotted line, you figure out how much interest is added into the total. Sometimes you can save not only this interest by paying cash, but even get a discount. Many rural families receive crop, livestock, or milk checks in a lump payment and it might be possible and worth while to wait for this so as to pay cash and save interest charges. In many cases, payment within 60 to 90 days is regarded as a cash payment.

The Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and various agricultural experiment stations have made studies of the cost of operation, of different kinds of mechanical refrigerators, and their efficiency for keeping foods properly cold. No one best brand or make can be recommended. Most of those that are widely known have many excellent features and a few drawbacks. The selection of one or another depends to some extent on the reputation of the local dealer handling a given make and his facilities for service, should it be needed.

The size of the box is one of the main considerations. A farm family should never buy too small a box,- probably not less than a six- or eight-cubic foot capacity. Its refrigerator will be needed to store not only the day to day food supplies for the family table but also the reserve supplies, bought less frequently than those of the city housewife. The farm housewife will also want to store in her refrigerator such things as butter, eggs, cream, and perhaps vegetables, which she sells. If there is much entertaining or if large numbers of field helpers must be fed it should be even larger.

The size of the cabinet should be stated plainly on its name plate in cubic feet of usable food storage space. And you must remember that too great a distance between shelves decreases usable space.

Lacks:
Dec. 14, 1937

The cabinet should maintain satisfactory temperatures under standard conditions of operation. This means that even when the refrigerator must stand in the kitchen, the milk compartment will still maintain a temperature of 45 degrees Fahrenheit, or below, and the average temperature of the food compartment should not exceed 50 degrees Fahrenheit at any time.

Ask for information about the insulation of the cabinet. How thick is it? What is it made of? How is it put in? Corkboard or vegetable fiber made into rigid slabs and coated with a waterproof substance are two of the most common and satisfactory types of insulation. Insultation should be at least 2 inches thick.

Look at the frame of the cabinet. It must be rigid and strong enough for the weight of the box itself and its contents. Practically all electric refrigerators are now made with a one-piece porcelain lining.

The outside should be smooth, water-resistant, and easily cleaned. It should have a finish that will not deteriorate in appearance, such as porcelain or one of the promising new materials.

The food compartment should be so placed and arranged that you can use it without stooping. The legs should be long enough to permit cleaning underneath. Look at the shelves. They should be non-tarnishable, strong, easily cleaned, and permit easy air movement. Some of the shelves should be entirely removable so a different use of space will be possible at times. Sliding shelves are desirable for deep boxes, but they should be balanced to prevent tipping when pulled out. Hooks are better than grooves for stationary shelves. The shelf spacing should provide for the foods logically stored on each. The space above the shelf in the coldest portion of the food compartment should be at least 10 inches high to accommodate quart milk bottles. The walls of the interior, especially around the shelf supports, should be easy to clean.

Do the doors fit tightly against the rubber or composition gaskets? Are they held securely with pressure latches against at least half an inch of bearing space, to make them air-tight? Are they insulated in the same way as the rest of the cabinet walls? Are the hinges strong, of good quality, non-rusting? And does the door open in the most convenient direction for use? You can get refrigerators with doors opening either way, you know.

The mechanical unit that runs the refrigerator should be quiet. Listen to it in operation and if possible, find out whether it may become noisy later on. Don't forget to check the over-all height, width, and depth of the model you are considering with the dimensions of the space where it is to stand. If you can get a refrigerator with an electric light that flashes on when you open the door, you will find it a convenience; also a mechanism to help in removing trays.

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